

***Oregon, National Marine Fisheries Service Reach Settlement
with Portland General Electric on Willamette Fish Kill***

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The National Marine Fisheries Service and the state of Oregon have reached a settlement with Portland General Electric stemming from an incident last spring in which federally protected adult chinook salmon were electrocuted by a short circuit at PGE's Sullivan Plant in West Linn, southeast of Portland.

The incident, which sent electricity across the Willamette River below the falls where hundreds of spring chinook were holding before moving upstream to spawn, was triggered when a bird caused a short in a high-voltage power line.

"PGE has been extremely cooperative throughout this entire event," said Bob Lohn, head of the fisheries service's Northwest regional office in Seattle. "And they've helped put together a significant settlement package to upgrade the safety of their plant and improve salmon passage."

As part of that settlement package, signed today, PGE agreed to compensate for the chinook losses by paying for \$225,000 in improvements to Oregon's fish ladder at the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Willamette Falls fishway.

In addition, the utility has replaced sections of uninsulated wire with insulated wire and has taken other measures to reduce the possibility of a similar accident in the future. It has also improved the system it uses to notify state and federal authorities if an accident occurs.

Members of the Oregon state police, special agents from the National Marine Fisheries Service, which is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and biologists from Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife were involved in the investigation. Upper Willamette spring chinook are protected as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

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